DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 385 065 EC 304 098

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TITLE The Extent of Participation in Extracurricular Activities at the Secondary Level of Students with Different Exceptionalities in an Urban School District.
PUB DATE Jul 94
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the International Conference of the International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education (8th, Portland, OR, July 8-11, 1994).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Athletics; Clubs; *Disabilities; *Extracurricular Activities; High Schools; *High School Students; Music Activities; Public Schools; *Student Interests; *Student Participation; Student Volunteers; Urban Schools

ABSTRACT

Participation in extracurricular activities by 124 secondary students who had exceptionalities was studied at 8 public high schools in an urban area of northeastern Ohio. Questionnaires were completed by students who participated in extracurricular activities and those who did not. Study variables were: student's gender and grade level; type of class (mainstreamed or self-contained); and type of exceptionality (developmentally handicapped, learning disabled, visually handicapped, hearing handicapped, orthopedically handicapped, and multihandicapped). Findings include: 60 percent of the students participated in some kind of in-school or out-of-school activity; for the students who participated in school activities, 94 percent were involved in at least one in-school activity and 48 percent were involved in at least one out-of-school activity; for the students who did not participate in activities at school, 37 percent were involved in at least one out-of-school activity; 72 percent of students participated for fun and personal enjoyment, and 58 percent participated for personal achievement; reasons for nonparticipation included transportation problems (26 percent) and physical limitations (23 percent); in-school activities included athletics, band/choir, drama, student council, and clubs; out-of-school activities included choir, youth groups, scouts, and volunteer programs. (Contains six references.) (SW)

THE EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL OF STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT EXCEPTIONALITIES IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Paper Presented at the 8th International Conference of the International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education

Portland, Oregon
July 8 - 11, 1994

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent of participation in extracurricular activities of 124 secondary students, grades 9 - 12, with six different exceptionalities. These students were enrolled in eight public senior high schools in an urban school district in northeastern Ohio. A three part questionnaire survey was administered to students who participated in extracurricular activities and to those who did not. Concerns regarding extracurricular activities and a rationale for participation and nonparticipation were also assessed. Nine research hypotheses were tested utilizing the chi-square statistic. The variables were: (a) students with different exceptionalities, (b) gender of students with different exceptionalities, (c) classes of students with different exceptionalities, and (d) grade levels of students with different exceptionalities. The study revealed that there was a significant difference of participation among students with different exceptionalities, and among male students with different exceptionalities. Futhermore, it was revealed that over half of the respondents participated in some kind of in-school or out-of-school activities. Some were involved in more than one activity. The majority of students participated in extracurricular activities for fun and personal enjoyment (72%), and for personal achievement (58%). A large percentage of nonparticipants were not involved in extracurricular activities because of transportation problems (26%), and physical limitations (23%). The implications of the study were also discussed.

THE EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL OF STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT EXCEPTIONALITIES IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to investigate the extent of participation in extracurricular activities of secondary students with different exceptionalities, and to develop a rationale for participation and nonparticipation. Students with different exceptionalities were not always accepted by society or included in the educational environment. In the past these students were ignored, ostracized and isolated from society. Those who were not "stored away" in poor houses and in other charitable centers were left at home with no educational provisions (Kirk & Gallagher, 1989). Now, as a result of advocacy groups, parental pressure, and federal legislation these students have a legal right to receive a free, appropriate education to maximize their potentials in the least restrictive environment. These students also have a legal right to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

Significance of the Study

Although more than 80% of students participate in some kind of school-related activity, very few studies have

been done to determine the extent of participation for students with different exceptionalities. The few studies that were done involved only students classified as educable mentally retarded (EMR), mentally retarded (MR), and learning disabled (LD). My research involved six areas of classifications: developmentally handicapped (DH), also referred to as EMR or MR; specific learning disabled (SLD), also referred to as LD; visually handicapped (VH); hearing handicapped (HH); orthopedically handicapped (OH), and multihandicapped (MH). One hundred twenty-four secondary students, grades 9 - 12, were involved in the study (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). The results indicated that over half of the respondents (60%) participated in some kind of in-school or out-of school activity. Some were involved in more than one activity.

Table 1

Sampling of Total Distribution

Variable	N	%
Gender		
male	65	52.4
female	59	47.6
Grade Level		
9th	31	25.0
10th	29	23.4
11th	25	20.2
12th	39	31.4
Class		
mainstreamed	64	51.2
self-contained	60	48.8
Classification		
Developmentally Handicapped	60	48.4
Specific Learning Disabled	31	25.0
Visually Handicapped	3	2.4
Hearing Handicapped	6	4.8
Orthopedically Handicapped	14	11.3
Multihandicapped	10	8.1

Note. N = 124 for each variable.

Table 2

Sampling of Participants

Variable	N	%
Gender		
male	26	48.1
female	28	51.9
Grade Level		
9th	16	29.6
10th	10	18.5
11th	11	20.4
12th	17	31.5
Class		
mainstreamed	37	68.5
self-contained	17	31.5
Classification		
Developmentally Handicapped	19	35.2
Specific Learning Disabled	24	44.4
Visually Handicapped	3	5.6
Hearing Handicapped	4	7.4
Orthopedically Handicapped	1	1.9
Multihandicapped	3	5.6

Note. N = 54 for each variable.

Table 3

Sampling of Nonparticipants

Variable	N	%
Gender		
male	39	55.7
female	31	44.3
Grade Level		
9th	15	21.4
10th	19	27.1
11th	14	20.0
12th	22	31.4
Class		
mainstreamed	27	39.0
self-contained	43	61.0
Classification		
Developmentally Handicapped	41	58.5
Specific Learning Disabled	7	10.0
Visually Handicapped	0	0.0
Hearing Handicapped	2	2.9
Orthopedically Handicapped	13	18.6
Multihandicapped	7	10.0

Note. N = 70 for each variable.

Research studies occur that participation in extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on the overall development of personal growth and self-worth (Biernat & Kleese, 1989; Education Week, 1984; Gholson, 1985; Holland & Andre, 1987; Nover, 1981). Knowledge gained from this research can assist supervisors who work with students teachers and/or classroom teachers in planning for students with different exceptionalities to participate in some kind of school-related activity. These activities can be incorporated into the students' educational programs. Supervisors, especially, can also encourage teachers to get students involved in activities that are designed to meet their individual needs and interests. Administrators as well as the entire school personnel can extol the virtues of participating in some kind of extracurricular activity. Providing an holistic approach in meeting the academic and social needs of students with different exceptionalities can be beneficial.

Research Design

The research design used in this study was ex post facto. A three part questionnaire survey was administered to students who participated in extracurricular activities and to those who did not. In addition to obtaining demographic information, the questionnaire assessed a rationale for participation and nonparticipation, and addressed concerns regarding extracurricular activities.

Nine research hypotheses of the study were tested at the .05 level of significance utilizing the chi-square statistic. The degree of freedom was 5 for all analyses. The formula was as follows:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

The variables were (a) students with different exceptionalities, (b) gender of students with different exceptionalities, (c) classes of students with different exceptionalities, and (d) grade levels of students with different exceptionalities.

Conclusions

In-School Activities (Participants)

Of the 54 respondents who participated in extracurricular activities, nearly all (94%) were involved in at least one in-school activity (see Figure 1).

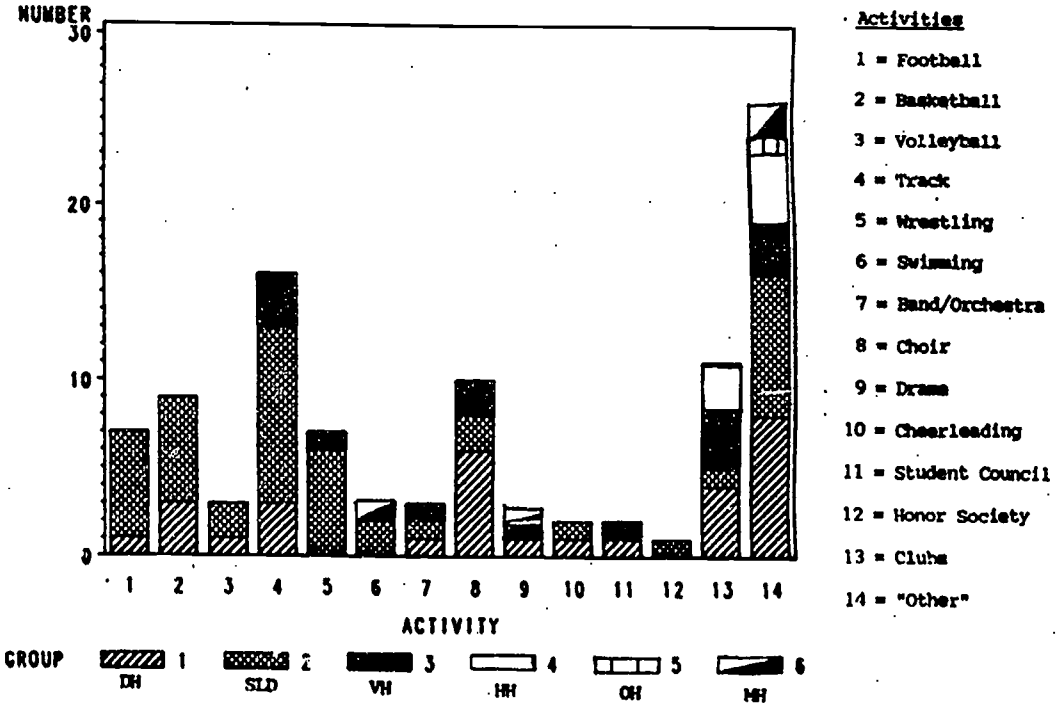

Figure 1. Participation in in-school activities by different exceptionalities (participants).

Out-of School Activities (Participants)

Nearly half of the 54 respondents (48%) were also involved in at least one out-of school activity (see Figure 2).

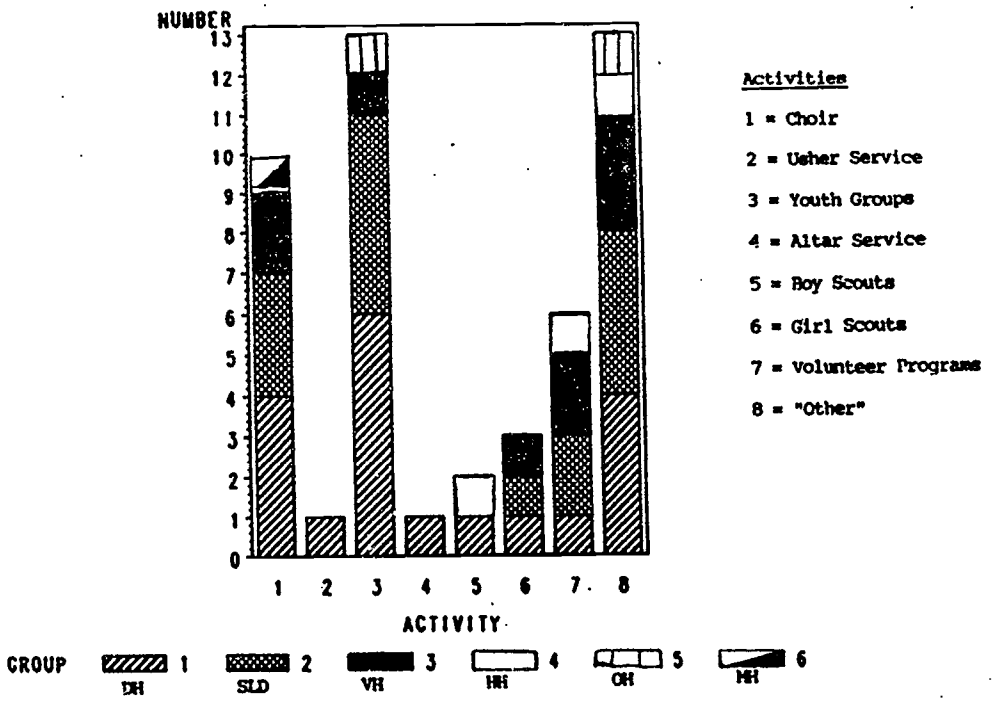

Figure 2. Participation in out-of school activities by different exceptionalities (participants).

Out-of School Activities (Nonparticipants)

Although these students were not involved in an in-school activity, a little over one-third (37%) were involved in at least one out-of school activity (see Figure 3).

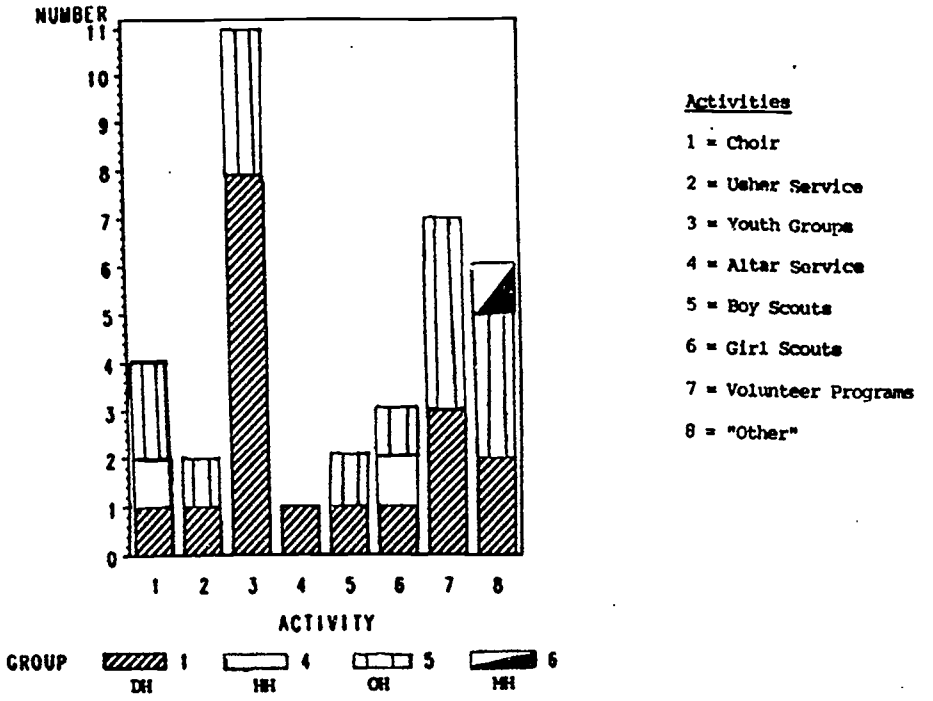

Figure 3. Participation in out-of school activities by different exceptionalities (nonparticipants).

Questionnaire Surveys

Data reveal that almost half (46%) of the participants became interested in extracurricular activities because they were either encouraged by friends, or by the school personnel. Conversely, several nonparticipants felt that they would become involved in activities if their teachers or counselor would express support and encouragement.

Research Hypotheses

Two of the nine research hypotheses were found to be significant. The reported findings indicated that there is a significant difference of participation among students with different exceptionalities, and among male students with different exceptionalities (see Tables 26 and 27).

Table 26

Participation Among Students With Different Exceptionalities

	Cell	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o-f_e)^2}{f_e}$
O_1	Developmentally Handicapped	19	26	-7	49	1.88
O_2	Specific Learning Disabled	24	14	10	100	7.14
O_3	Visually Handicapped	3	1	2	4	4.00
O_4	Hearing Handicapped	4	3	1	1	.33
O_5	Orthopedically Handicapped	1	6	-5	25	4.17
O_6	Multihandicapped	3	4	-1	1	.25
						$X^2 = 17.77$

Note. .05 Probablity level = 11.07; $X^2 > 11.07$; Accept Hypothesis

Table 27

Participation Among Male Students With Different Exceptionalities

	Cell	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o-f_e)^2}{f_e}$
O_1	Developmentally Handicapped	7	11	-4	16	1.45
O_2	Specific Learning Disabled	15	8	7	49	6.13
O_3	Visually Handicapped	1	1	0	0	0.0
O_4	Hearing Handicapped	2	1	1	1	1.00
O_5	Orthopedically Handicapped	0	3	-3	9	3.00
O_6	Multihandicapped	1	2	-1	1	.50
						$X^2 = 12.08$

Note. .05 Probablity level = 11.07; $X^2 > 11.07$; Accept Hypothesis

Implications

1. Of the 124 students involved in the study, approximately 74 (60%) participated in some kind of in-school or out-of school activity. Some students were involved in more than one activity. This implies that students with different exceptionalities are gradually being accepted into the mainstream of the total school environment and into the community.

2. Although nonparticipants were not involved in any in-school related activity, a little more than one-third (37%) participated in some kind of out-of school activity. This high percentage was surprising as I would assume that students who were not involved in any in-school related activity were also the least likely to participate in any out-of school activity. This implies that the reasons given for nonparticipation in in-school activities were modified to allow for participation in out-of school activities which constituted a different environment and different circumstances.

3. Both participants and nonparticipants were mostly involved in youth groups, volunteer programs, and in "other" in-school and out-of school activities. The extent of this participation implies that all activities are tailored to meet individual needs and interests. One's handicapping condition should not be a deterrent for

nonparticipation in some kind of in-school or out-of school activity.

4. Reasons for participation in extracurricular activities for students with different exceptionalities were replicated from a national survey. These reasons were rank ordered according to high and low percentages. The two top priorities for participation from the national survey and from my survey reveal that students participated because of fun and personal enjoyment, and for personal achievement. Findings from both surveys further reveal that participation in extracurricular activities because "teachers expect it" received a low priority and similar rank order. These findings imply that whether students are handicapped or nonhandicapped, all have similar priorities that are not relegated to physical or mental conditions.

5. Half of the respondents have received awards or recognition since participating in extracurricular activities. The types of achievements were in such activities as academic/clubs, social/religious events, music, and sports. This implies that such achievements can be bestowed upon anyone who demonstrates excellence in academic and/or nonacademic pursuits. The abilities and talents of students with different exceptionalities should not be underestimated. These outstanding achievements can also serve as an incentive for those contemplating participation in in-school or out-of school activities.

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